

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in the Courtroom, Grantown Courthouse, Grantown-on-Spey on 11 February 2019 at 10.30 am.

### Present:

Mr J Bruce  
Mrs M Cockburn

Ms P Hadley  
Mr B Lobban

### In attendance:

Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager (Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey), Chief Executive's Office  
Mr R Porteous, Roads Operations Manager (Lochaber, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey)  
Mr R MacLeod, Principal Housing Officer  
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

### Also in attendance:

Ms S Smith, Head of Business Development, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Item 3)  
Mr K Rodgers, Head of Finance and Project Manager, NHS Highland (Item 4)  
Ms A Phimister, Area Manager, NHS Highland (Item 4)  
Inspector V Tough (Item 6)

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

### Mr B Lobban in the Chair

### Business

#### 1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 3 – Ms P Hadley (financial)  
Item 3 – Mr B Lobban (financial)  
Item 5 – Ms P Hadley (financial)  
Item 9 – Ms P Hadley (financial)

### 3. Cairngorm Mountain An Càrn Gorm

#### Declarations of Interest:

**Mr B Lobban declared a financial interest in this item as a Director of Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Ltd but having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that as this was a verbal update his interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion.**

**Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a member of the Cairngorm National Park Authority Board but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to take part in the discussion.**

A verbal update was provided on operations at Cairngorm Mountain by Ms Susan Smith, Head of Business Development, Highlands and Islands Enterprise during which the Committee was advised of the chain of events that had taken place after the appointment of financial administrators in November 2018. Priorities had been the protection of jobs and business including minimising any disadvantage to the supply chain, and for this reason it had been decided in the interim that the organisation required to be taken forward by the public rather than private sector, and Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd had been created. Details of the Company Directors were provided, a business plan was being developed and 3 key aims - set up, stabilisation and turnaround - were explained, as were the complexities, risks and challenges of managing a mountain-based business with ageing infrastructure. HIE's role was strategic rather than operational and work was being undertaken with the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the infrastructure, particularly the closed funicular railway, repairs to which would require a Scottish Government decision on funding.

During discussion the following issues were considered:

- scope for summer business activity was severely restricted while the funicular railway was out of action. An engineer's report was due by the start of March 2019, after which design, procurement and costs issues would be considered;
- there were approximately 72 employees, with most of those who usually worked in the Ptarmigan restaurant deployed to other activities. It was hoped the restaurant would be opened during any periods when there was sufficient snow for skiing; and
- the administrators had prescriptive legal processes to follow with regard to the company finances, creditors and debtors.

The Committee **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** that a further briefing for Members be arranged.

**4. NHS Highland: Healthcare in Badenoch and Strathspey  
NHS na Gàidhealtachd: Cùram-slàinte ann am Bàideanach agus Srath Spè**

An overview of the Delivery of Home Care Services in Badenoch and Strathspey was provided by Mr Kenny Rodgers, Head of Finance and Project Manager, and Ms Alison Phimister, Area Manager, NHS Highland. An update was also given on progress of the ongoing Redesign of Services including the new hospital project, with it being confirmed that the land for the development had now been purchased. The full business case would be going to the Scottish Government in May 2019, with the aim of starting work on the ground in July 2019.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- further design work was still anticipated in relation to the GP practices, and the funding arrangements for the maintenance of practices which were owned by the NHS versus those whose premises were privately owned were detailed;
- a newsletter was planned for every household in March 2019;
- the model of community care was challenging in rural areas due to workforce shortages, an ageing workforce, and travel distances. The policy to transition to independent sector provision of care at home, rather than in-house, with an in-house focus on enablement, was summarised. When the new service model had been implemented, NHS Highland had been providing 543 hours of in-house care at home per week, whereas in the last week 550 hours had been provided by the independent sector, and a further 180 of in-house hours on enablement. Details were also provided on current levels of waiting for service, some of which were people delayed in hospital;
- concern was expressed about recruitment shortages and the possible inability of the independent sector to cover all areas. Having 3 independent sector care providers operating in the B&S area meant that although they were trying to recruit from the same pool of potential staff, if one or more operators were to exit the market, cover could be provided by the other operators;
- age was not a barrier to recruitment although the role of carer could be physically challenging at times; and
- information was sought and provided on recruitment efforts.

The Committee **NOTED** the update.

**5. Cairngorm National Park Authority Proposed Local Development Plan  
Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail ga Mholadh le Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'  
Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

**Declaration of Interest - Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a member of the Cairngorm National Park Authority Board but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to take part in the discussion.**

It was considered essential a response from local Members was formulated in addition to the Council's response, and a meeting was required with an appropriate planning officer to facilitate this. The Chair suggested Councillor Caddick be invited to the meeting.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** that the Cairngorm National Park Authority had launched the consultation on its next Local Development Plan on Friday 25 January 2019. The new Local Development Plan would direct development within the Cairngorms National Park area for the period 2020-2025 and into the longer term; and **AGREED** to arrange for local Councillors and Carolyn Caddick to meet with appropriate officers to consider and respond to the consultation in tandem with the Highland Council's response as Local Authority.
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## 6. Police – Area Performance Summary Poileas – Geàrr-chunntas air Coileanadh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/01/19 dated 28 January 2019 by the Area Commander.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- Inspector Tough would attend the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Council Forum on 5 March 2019 as part of the aim to continue to engage with communities;
- attention was drawn to reports of speed alerts flashing even when vehicles were travelling below 30 mph;
- reference was made to national drug testing initiatives, noting that it would be helpful to have roadside tests;
- information was sought and provided on the types of items being shoplifted, which had increased significantly;
- reasons for drops in house-breaking were sought and included the possibility of a group operating in an area then moving on;
- recent activity with drug sniffer dogs had been in response to intelligence received;
- increased reporting of historical sexual crimes could be the result of improved support for victims. It was clarified that, for example, one person accused of eight crimes would count as eight incidents;
- the current police staffing situation was adequate though always challenging, and reference was made to the changing nature of policing due to internet issues; and
- the appropriate use of 101 was urged.

The Committee **NOTED** progress made against the objectives set within the Highland and Islands Local Policing Plan 2017-20 Year 2, attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018.

## 7. Kingussie Associated School Group Overview Tar-sealladh air Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Cheann Ghiùthsaidh

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/02/19 dated 31 January 2019 by the South Area Care & Learning Manager.

It was unfortunate that due to unforeseen absence no officer was present to speak to the report. Members were asked to raise any questions out-with the meeting and it was requested that a similar report for the other ASG was sought for the next meeting, with the appropriate officer to attend a Ward Business Meeting in the meantime.

The Committee:

- **NOTED** the information in relation to the schools within the Kingussie Associated School Group (ASG) and to note the achievements from Session 2017/18; and
- **AGREED** that a similar report for the other Area ASG be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and to invite the report writer to a Ward Business Meeting prior to the next Committee meeting.

## 8. Roads Maintenance Programme 2019/20 Prògram Càradh Rathaidean 2019/20

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/03/19 by dated 24 January 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion the following issues were considered:

- in future the programme should be discussed at a Ward Business Meeting prior to coming to the Area Committee;
- information was sought and provided on the different types and costs of road surface dressing, and attention was drawn to the challenging budget situation. Approximately 1/40 of the road network was being redressed annually, but with the dressing lasting on average ten years, it would be preferable if 1/10 of the network was tackled every year;
- information was sought and provided on the process for alerting the Roads department to new developments via the Transport Planning Manager and on the processes for road adoptions and road construction consents. Staff shortage was a concern in this regard;
- a ragging system was suggested for road conditions and it was pointed out that the condition of individual roads could change rapidly, especially after a spell of severe weather, and attention was drawn to the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS); and
- concern was expressed there was insufficient budget for structural maintenance for bridges and attention was drawn to the £180k capital budget into which Areas could bid for additional funds.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2019/20 Roads Maintenance Programme for the Badenoch & Strathspey Area.

**9. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018**  
**Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – I Giblean 2018 gu 31 Dùbhlachd 2018**

**Declaration of Interest – Ms P Hadley declared a financial interest in this item as a Council house tenant but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained in the room to participate in the discussion.**

There had been circulated Report No BSAC/04/19 dated 11 February 2019 by the Director of Community Services.

In response to a request from Members at a previous meeting, an analysis of homelessness statistics was provided. There had been a decrease in the number of presentations in Quarter 3 of 2018/19, with the most common reason being relationship breakdown in family homes, this affecting seven households. Most homeless presentations were single people, with the remainder comprising two couple and a single parent household.

During discussion the following issues were considered:

- information was sought and provided on the percentage of vacant houses becoming lettable, which was consistent at 6-8% and in line with the Highland average. New builds could impact on these figures;
- the Housing team was commended for the numbers of tenancies that were being sustained for over a year. This was a challenge in the Area because of the relatively high levels of transient employment; and
- concern was expressed about the repairs performance and this would be investigated. Rurality was a challenge in this regard, particularly because B&S was a non-contract area where contractors often had to be negotiated with individually, and the redesign team was giving consideration to this. Specific information could be provided out-with the meeting if required.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018.

**10. Minutes**  
**Geàrr-chunntas**

There had been circulated and **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 14 November 2018 which were approved by the Council on 13 December 2018.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.